

A Community Recovery Residence Frequently Asked Questions March 22, 2006

Why is this program being created?

Vermont has a long tradition of creating community-based mental health services that support recovery and meet people's needs in the most effective manner and in the most appropriate settings. Now Vermont is making new investments in rehabilitation and residential services in order to reduce our need for involuntary, inpatient care.

What is a Community Recovery Residence?

Similar to a "half-way house," the Community Recovery Residence will help people from the Vermont State Hospital transition back to the community. It is a therapeutic residential program with on-site medical and mental health services. The program is designed to help people who do not need inpatient care but who do need significant help to manage their daily lives.

Who will the residents be?

The residents will be adults who have been at Vermont State Hospital. They will have been diagnosed with mental illnesses such as schizophrenia or depression and may have other problems due to head injury; many also may have concurrent substance abuse issues.

Will any of the residents be violent or dangerous?

The residents of this program may have past histories of having been violent or of having been harmful to themselves. In those instances, their actions were due to mental illness, not criminal intent. When treated properly (for instance, when on medication and supervised), these individuals are not dangerous. The people living in this program will be in treatment, their conditions will be stable, and they will be under the supervision of trained staff.

How long will the residents stay in the program and where will they go after they graduate from the program?

Residents will stay in the program for six to 18 months. The goal of the program is to help people recover enough to be able to choose where they want to live. Most will likely choose to return to their home communities or to communities with shopping and services within easy walking distances. Some may choose to remain in the area.

How many people will be in the program?

The program will be licensed as a Level Three Care Home for 14 residents.

How many staff will be there and how will the residents be supervised?

There will be a staffing ratio of approximately one staff for every two clients, with a minimum of three or four on duty at all times. In addition, medical, psychiatric and occupational specialty staff will be at the program on a regular basis. The main entrance to the residence will be open from 7 a.m. until 9 p.m. every day, and then locked for the

night. The other entrances will be locked and/or electronically monitored throughout the day and night so that staff would always know if a resident were to leave the building.

At the beginning of their stay, residents visiting the community will be accompanied by staff. Residents who demonstrate appropriate behavior may visit the community unaccompanied as their treatment progresses.

What are the benefits to our community's having this program?

The program will employ about 30 people, with an annual payroll of \$1.5 million. Approximately five of the jobs will be for nurses. Other positions will be for people with high school or college degrees, paying between \$13 -\$16 an hour and offering full medical benefits.

Full real estate property taxes will be paid to the local municipality.

The program will provide a base for additional mental health services needed in the local area.

Who will run the program? How will it be funded?

The program will be run by a consortium of local community mental health agencies: the Clara Martin Center of Orange County, Washington County Mental Health Services, and the Howard Center of Chittenden County. These agencies currently operate similar residential programs and employ more than 2,000 Vermonters.

The funding will come from the State of Vermont, using a combination of state and federal funds. The Vermont Department of Health and the Vermont Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living's Division of Licensing and Protection will regulate and oversee the program to ensure that it is well run and provides effective treatment.